

Soldiers

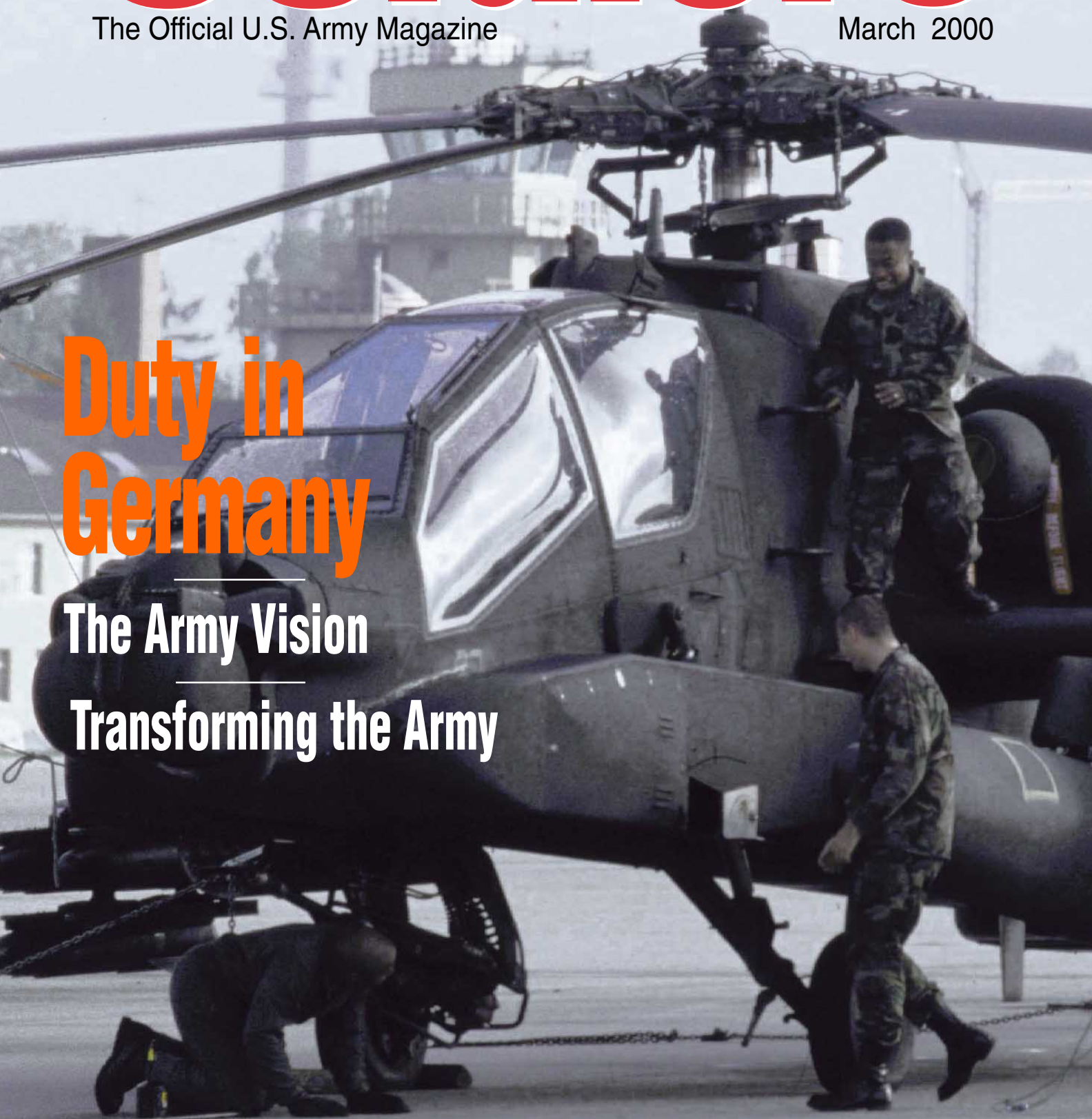
The Official U.S. Army Magazine

March 2000

**Duty in
Germany**

The Army Vision

Transforming the Army





Soldiers in Humvees patrol a Kosovo town as residents look on. USAREUR units now make up the bulk of U.S. military forces in Kosovo.

Duty in Germany

(continued from page 41)
the 6th Bn., 52nd ADA.

While the Army wrestles with frequent deployments and the effects of downsizing, Abizaïd said, "the nature of the Army is that you have to constantly train because of the flux of soldiers and leaders with each summer rotation.

"What we got ready for six months ago, isn't what we need to get ready for today," Abizaïd added. "Kosovo's a prime example. First we thought we'd have to go in fighting. Then we learned it was a peacekeeping mission. Later we realized the situation over there is much more dangerous than we thought."

Training is critical, Abizaïd said,

Supporting Soldiers and Fam

AREA support groups in Germany provide deployed soldiers peace of mind that their families are OK, said 98th ASG spokesman Don Klinger.

Some 3,000 people make up the Würzburg-based 98th ASG, which supports about 42,000 people, said Klinger. They are responsible for everything from housing maintenance and security to utilities, schools, clubs, daycare centers and morale, welfare and recreation services.

The 98th ASG is the largest of three ASGs in Bavaria, in the number of troops it supports. Together with its base support battalions — in Schweinfurt, Bamberg, Giebelstadt, Kitzingen, Illesheim and Ansbach — the 98th supports soldiers and family members, as well as retirees and others eligible for such support.

"We're a society superimposed on another society, an apples-to-oranges, nuts-and-bolts organization that provides everything to the soldier and



Family support groups within USAREUR ease the transition from stateside life to life in Europe, and help relieve the stress on the spouses of deployed soldiers.

family member 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Klinger. "Each BSB is different, based on its geographical area and tenant units."

"In the last year, every battalion in this brigade deployed to Macedonia or Kosovo. Two years ago they were deployed to Bosnia," said CPT David

Reardon, the rear detachment representative for the 1st Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade.

"We formed the Family Support Rear Detachment Council that initially met daily, then twice weekly, to organize special events and services for those left behind," Reardon said.



Duty in Germany

“but we have to make sure we’re smart enough when we come back from a deployment to allow soldiers to be reintegrated into their families.

“We have to train our soldiers on skills that disintegrated while they were on peacekeeping missions, but that doesn’t mean they’re training 300 days out of every year,” Abizaid said. “People forget that even during World War II, we didn’t keep soldiers on the line. We rotated them from front to rear.

“Our soldiers in Kosovo have been fired upon with mortars, recoilless rifles and small arms. They’ve had to pick up bodies and investigate murders. I don’t anticipate them being reinstituted for six to nine months after they return from that challenging deployment,” Abizaid said.



Chaplains in deployed units help soldiers cope with family separations through religious services and counseling.

“... we have to make sure we’re smart enough when we come back from a deployment to allow soldiers to be reintegrated into their families.”

Some 65,000 U.S. soldiers are still forward-deployed in Europe 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, USAREUR officials said.

Given the ongoing threats to peace and stability in USAREUR’s area of operations, the Army’s presence in Europe — and the challenges facing the soldiers stationed there — are sure to continue. □

families

**Story and Photos by
Heike Hasenauer**

“After the initial deployment of 2,200 of our soldiers in June, we realized a need for more school counselors to help our children face their mom’s or dad’s deployment,” said LTC James Comish, commander of the 280th BSB in Schweinfurt. Chaplains, who normally would have heard the children’s concerns, had all deployed with their units.

“Department of Defense Education Association officials funded more counselors, a school psychologist and a clinical psychiatrist,” Comish said. Army Reserve unit-ministry teams also augmented deployed chaplains.

Local German police conducted cooperative patrols in U.S. housing areas to alleviate security concerns before MPs could arrive to replace those who deployed, Comish added.

“Because our soldiers are constantly deploying to world hot spots, we have unit service coordinators — typically a first sergeant or family liaison person — at every unit to plan

special events. They also conduct traveling ‘road shows’ that advertise what ACS offers,” said Jo Eels, Schweinfurt’s ACS director.

Eels said support personnel encourage spouses to remain in Germany



Würzburg Elementary School pupils have the same opportunities for mental and physical growth as their stateside peers.

rather than return to the United States when the soldier deploys, “because the support is here. This is where the people are who understand what you’re going through,” she said.

Soon after Teresa Reese’s husband, 1st Bn., 77th Armor, commander LTC Timothy Reese, deployed to Kosovo, she helped form a cooperative with restaurants in the Schweinfurt area. “We got them to hold family nights, and we got theaters to show more family movies,” Reese said.

On the U.S. military installation, businesses stayed in business, too, because family members were encouraged and enticed to use them. Clubs and bowling alleys sponsored children’s events. And childcare was provided to give adults some much-needed time away from their children.

“A most difficult time was after the deaths of three soldiers in Kosovo,” Reese reflected. Two died in vehicle accidents, the other was electrocuted.

(continued on page 44)



When not deployed, many USAREUR-based soldiers come home to well-maintained barracks and comfortable rooms like this one in Vilseck.



“Taking classes or volunteering brings spouses together with other adults experiencing similar circumstances”

Supporting Soldiers and Families

(continued from page 43)

Chaplain (CPT) Robert Nay, a 1st Inf. Div. chaplain in Schweinfurt, performed services for the soldiers who died. “Two of them were married,” he said. “I had to go with the senior officer in the battalion to tell the wives and children.”

Tragic as the deaths were, Reese said it drew the spouses of deployed soldiers closer.

Again ACS services helped. An ACS-provided computer program allowed soldiers and their spouses to see and talk to each other via video-gram.

A community homepage kept families abreast of what was happening in Kosovo, “so rear-detachment commanders heard about events, including the fatalities, before CNN

did,” Reese said. Casualty working groups immediately formed to assist the bereaved families.

Simultaneously, ACS classes, programs and handouts addressed virtually every concern soldiers or families might have had, Eels said.

“Our goal is to empower family members or single soldiers to take charge of their lives. We do that by encouraging spouses to be productive while a loved one is deployed,” said Eels. ACS offers free computer and language-skills training, and provides volunteer opportunities.

“Taking classes or volunteering brings spouses together with other adults experiencing similar circumstances, and teaches them new skills to make them more marketable,” Eels said.

“Wives get depressed when they realize their husbands aren’t coming home for dinner, night after night,” said FAP chief Rachel Henry. When this happens, she said, some of them lose all motivation to care for themselves, their children or their homes.

“We’re not punitive,” said Henry. “We’re just here to provide resources to those who need help.” That help can come in the form of anger-management classes, family therapy, or a daytime trip for shopping or sightseeing. □

A Choice

Story and Photos by Heike Hasenauer

LTC Stan Sims, commander of the 235th Base Support Battalion in Ansbach, Germany, tells his mother that he’s the mayor of the five military communities under his jurisdiction, including four kasernes in Ansbach and Stork Barracks in nearby Illesheim.

Ansbach

“I want the Ansbach community to be the community of choice in U.S.



Duty in Germany